

Village Board of Aldermen
Regularly Scheduled Board of Aldermen
Meeting Minutes
Municipal Building, 301 N. Stagecoach Rd.
Thursday, February 5, 2015 6:30pm

Members present: Mayor Skip Blancett, Mayor Pro Tem Fred Brown, Alderman Michael McDougal, Alderman Amber Preston Dankert, Alderman Frank Coachman, Alderman Hans Fields

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Kim Foutz - Village Administrator, Douglas Hansen – Village Secretary, Jack Hensley - Chief of Police, Debbie Charbonneau – Executive Director

I. Call To Order : Mayor Blancett called the meeting to order at 6:30pm, quorum present.

The Mayor welcomed three guests, Bell County Judge Jon Burrows, Bell County Commissioner Tim Brown, and Adam Henry from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA)

1. Laura Franklin, senior pastor at Salado United Methodist Church, led the invocation.
2. Pledge of Allegiance and Texas Pledge of Allegiance were recited.

II. Reports:

Mayor's Report: The Mayor delivered the State of Salado address. A copy is attached to these Minutes.

Aldermen Updates:

Environmental Report Alderman Dankert reported that we will hear a presentation on controlling the buzzard population later in the Board of Aldermen meeting. She reported that the Mill Creek Community Association will be renewing the sand and gravel permit from Texas Parks and Wildlife and that citizens should see better results at the lower water crossing at Mill Creek as early as this summer.

Ordinance Committee Report Alderman Coachman reported that he would delay his report on ordinances until the public hearing on the ordinance under consideration at this meeting

Main Street Report Mayor Pro Tem Brown reported that the Village would meet with Texas A&M in March at a Town Hall Meeting regarding improving Main Street. He reported that volunteers took down the Christmas decorations last weekend and thanked the volunteers. He reported that he and Alderman Coachman left the lights on Main Street Bridge and would like them to be up year-round

Street Improvement Committee Alderman McDougal reported that we now have a system in the Village for repairing roads and potholes. In the last month we have filled more than 25 potholes. The Police Chief and officers report locations of potholes that they see while on patrol on a daily basis. The Village is now accepting bids on the three major street projects and the bids will be opened on February 17th. We hope to have several bidders. Work on the roads should begin around April 1st.

The Mayor thanked the Aldermen and emphasized that roads improvement is a five-year plan and asked for citizen patience when construction begins and the roads get muddy.

III. Proclamations: none

IV. Public Comments:

3. Four individuals made public comments, summarized below.

Jill Shipman, 711 College Hill, spoke in opposition to an increase in the hotel tax under consideration. She commented that she has only once received business from Expo events in the last 15 years. She said that Salado would receive no benefit from the tax. She said that the proposed rodeo expansion would be against Salado's

interest, and that the addition of more trailer hookups would only encourage even more people to stay there instead of in Salado.

Dwight Peak, 1517 Rusty Nail Drive in Temple said that he wanted to be an advocate for the vultures. He commented that vultures protect us because they eat what people cannot. He said that there is a large economic loss to countries that lose their vultures due to higher health care costs. He said that deer are more likely to be a health risk than vultures. He said that the negative impact of removing the vultures is unknown and questioned whether the expense of removing them is justified.

Creta Ferrin, 1 Homestead Rd, spoke in opposition to the two percent tax. She mentioned that she notices that there are seldom guests at a local inn. She said that when there are events at the Bell Expo center, few people stay in Salado. She said that Salado works hard to bring people to its restaurants, hotels, and bed-and-breakfasts and that we don't need to support the hotels that compete with Salado hotels.

Will Lowery, 602 Center Circle, spoke about the occupancy tax. He commented that Tim Brown's contributions to Salado have been appreciated over the years. He said that he had been a part of several discussions about the occupancy tax that focused on how Salado can support the tax, instead of just saying, "No." He said that discussions have tried to find a protocol to send appropriate lodging opportunities toward Salado. He said that Salado is very good at targeting its specific market and that guests that stay in Salado as a result of the Expo Center are rare.

V. Consent Agenda

4. Consider approving the Consent Agenda items:

Minutes: (a) January 15, 2015 Regular Meeting. (b) January 22, 2015 Special Called Meeting.

Alderman Fields pointed out that there was an error in the Minutes for the January 15th Meeting – Larry Sands led the invocation at that meeting, not Larry Wolfe. Alderman McDougal moved that the Minutes of the January 22nd Meeting be accepted as given and that the Minutes of the January 15th Meeting be accepted with the correction noted. Alderman Coachman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

VI. Regular Agenda:

Resolutions – none

Public Hearings / Ordinances:

5. Hold a public hearing and consider adopting an ordinance amending Ordinance 2012.03, Building Permits and Building Codes as follows:

(A) Adopting the 2009 International Existing Building Code with local amendments; and

(B) Adopting the 2009 International Fire Code with local amendments; and

(C) Adopting the 2009 International Fuel Gas Code; and

(D) Repealing the 2009 International Electrical Code;

(E) Adopting the 2011 National Electric Code;

(F) Adopting the 2009 International Residential Building Code with local amendments; and

(G) Adopting the 2009 International Mechanical Code with local amendments; and

(H) Adopting the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code with local amendments; and

(I) Amending the Plan Review and Inspections and Permit Application Sections providing authority to the Village Administrator

Alderman Coachman introduced the members of the ordinance committee: Jay Rich, George Dentry, John Kohokutec, Donna Johnson, and Dave Williams. Alderman Coachman emphasized that Dave Williams did a great deal of work putting data together. Alderman Coachman also thanked Alderman Fields for his contributions to the committee. The committee looked at ordinances in several neighboring towns and cities and agreed that Building Codes needed to be updated first. Alderman Coachman summarized the modified requirements of the Code to be adopted and said that the updated Code would make the process easier and more consistent for builders. The Mayor opened the public hearing. No comments were made. The Mayor closed the public hearing.

Alderman Fields made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2015.02, amending Ordinance 2012.03, Building Permits and Building Codes, as presented. Alderman Coachman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

6. Hold a public hearing and consider adopting an ordinance establishing the duties and supervisory role of the Village Administrator

Village Administrator Kim Foutz summarized the ordinance to delegate hire and fire authority from the Board of Aldermen to the Village Administrator. The Mayor opened the public hearing. No comments were made. The Mayor closed the public hearing. Alderman Coachman made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2015.03, establishing the duties and supervisory role of the Village Administrator, as amended. Alderman Coachman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Miscellaneous

The Mayor asked Commissioner Tim Brown if he would allow Agenda item nine to move in front of Tim Brown's because Adam Henry, the Agenda item nine presenter, had to drive back to Dallas that night. Tim Brown agreed.

9. Presentation by the USDA regarding controlling the buzzard population in Salado

Adam Henry of USDA Wildlife Services said that potential buzzard removal would require private property owner permission, would be paid for by the County and free to citizens, and could begin after a request by the city. He said that possible methods of harassment would be pyrotechnics, fake dead birds, and helium balloons. Pyrotechnics would be about as loud as a 12-gauge shotgun. Alderman McDougal asked Mr. Henry how far the buzzards would go when they were scared away. Mr. Henry said that would depend on where they are flying during the day to find food. Alderman McDougal asked if they would return once they had been scared away. Mr. Henry said that they seldom return once scared away. Alderman Dankert asked when the USDA would be able to begin scaring away birds, if invited by the Village. Mr. Henry said that that would depend on their schedule at the time, but that it could be within two weeks.

The Mayor thanked Adam Henry and asked that discussion of this item be placed on the Workshop Agenda for February 19th.

7. Presentation by Tim Brown, Bell County Commissioner, requesting a resolution of support by the Village of Salado for a Bell County Hotel Occupancy Tax.

Tim Brown made a presentation summarizing the proposed Bell County Hotel Occupancy Tax. He said that the Bell County Expo Center is a regional asset that is missing out on events because it is not large enough to accommodate organizations that would otherwise be interested in holding their events there. He said a permanent dirt facility and air-conditioning the exhibition hall would help the Expo Center attract more events. He said that he understood the objections of the bed-and-breakfast community that the bed-and-breakfasts do not benefit from Expo events, but that Salado restaurants and stores can benefit from additional visitors in the area. He said that the trailer hookups in question are almost all used by vendors. He said that a 2% tax approved by all the Bell County communities would generate approximately \$1 million for the Expo Center, and that 15% of that would be remitted back to the communities; this remittance for Salado would be approximately \$9100 a year. He said that Temple, Belton, and Harker Heights have passed resolutions to support the tax, and Killeen will probably reverse its previous opposition.

Bell County Judge Jon Burrows said that the Expo Center is 27 years old and currently brings in \$2.8 million in visitor spending a year to surrounding communities. He said that the proposed expansion would bring in more events and therefore more money.

Mayor Pro Tem Brown asked if the 15% remittance could go back to Salado bed-and-breakfasts. Tim Brown said that, because the money would have come from the 2% tax, it would have to go back to the Village. The Village could use it support bed-and-breakfasts, for example by spending it on marketing.

Alderman McDougal asked what other sources of funding the Expo Center receives. Judge Burrows said that the Expo Center does receive rental fees but that the benefit goes to business owners of the County. Alderman McDougal said that it seemed that the 2% tax goes toward a lot more than some more dirt, and Tim Brown agreed.

Alderman Fields asked when the attached study was done, and Tim Brown said that it was done in 2008. Alderman Fields asked if the study was correct showing 200 recreational vehicle (RV) hookups. Tim Brown replied that the current plan only has 27 RV hookups. Alderman Fields said that it would be difficult to support this plan without the current written plan, and that he has spoken with most Village bed-and-breakfast and lodging business owners and has not heard support for this tax. Tim Brown said that the recommendations in the study were only

recommendations; the study cost \$50,000 to examine the economic impact of expanding the Expo Center and they only changed the plans, not the study. Alderman Fields asked Tim Brown to please provide the Village with a current copy of the plan and Tim Brown said that he would.

The Mayor asked that discussion of the Bell County Expo Tax be placed on the Workshop Agenda for Feb 19th so that the Aldermen can get comments from citizens before that meeting.

8. Consider and take action on a Concept Plan of Amity Estates, a ±177.473 acre, Five Phase, 197 lot, residential subdivision, located at the southwest corner of West Amity Road FM 1670 located in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction of Salado.

Village Administrator Kim Foutz gave the presentation summarizing the Concept Plan for Amity Estates attached to the Agenda Packet. The Mayor called for questions. Alderman Dankert asked about the drainage plan; Administrator Foutz answered that the Village of Salado would receive the drainage plan with the Construction Plat phase; Administrator Foutz said that a time frame for that had not been discussed to date but that that would be discussed in the future; she added that there is a small amount of real estate in between this subdivision and the city limits. Alderman Fields asked if that meant that Amity Estates would not be able to come in to the city limits even if they wanted to, and Administrator Foutz said that that was correct, because the land is not contiguous. Administrator Foutz added that the Village and the subdivision can sign development agreements indicating that as soon as they are able to come in to the Village, they would do so. Alderman McDougal asked if that meant that Amity could come in to the Village if the small tracts of land in between Amity and Salado came in to the Village. Administrator Foutz said that was correct. Alderman Coachman made a motion to approve the Concept Plan for Amity Estates, Alderman McDougal seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Executive Session:

Mayor Blancett closed the regular meeting at 8:00 p.m. and directed that the building be cleared and the Executive Session open at 8:05 p.m. The Board addressed three Agenda items in Executive Session.

10. Discuss the Sanctuary project.

11. Discuss the Robertson Tract project.

12. Discuss a possible appointment to the position of Assistant to the Village Administrator.

VII. Regular Session

13. The Mayor re-opened the Regular Meeting at 8:59 p.m. Alderman Coachman made a motion to ratify the appointment of Christina Lee as Development and Code Enforcement Clerk for the Village of Salado. Alderman McDougal seconded and the motion passed 4-1 with Alderman Fields voting against.

Announcements:

The Village will hold a Town Hall Meeting with Texas Department of Transportation and James Construction. It will be at the Salado Intermediate School cafeteria at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 17th.

Next Scheduled Board of Aldermen meeting will be at the Municipal Building on Thursday, February 19th, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

The Mayor announced that he will be going out of town on Friday, February 6th, traveling to North Carolina for family matters, and that Mayor Pro Tem Brown will be serving as Mayor during his one-day absence.

Alderman Coachman made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Alderman McDougal seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
SKIP BLANCETT, Mayor of the Village of Salado, Texas

ATTEST: _____
DOUGLAS A. HANSEN, Village Secretary

Attached:
Text of the State of Salado Address given by Mayor Blancett at this meeting.

Where we were

In May, 2014, the issues were sewer vs septic, roads, ordinances, permits, I-35 Construction, lack of business, and citizen depression. The election had not been easy and the aftermath confusing and frustrating. People were divided, groups had formed, and people were generally unhappy.

In a 6-hour workshop with the Aldermen/Lady, we decided it was up to us to turn things around. We had to become optimistic, positive, and enthusiastic. We had to decide to stop being a Village that "can't" and become a village that "can."

In that meeting, 5 major issues were identified: Sewer, Roads, Ordinances, Environment, and Downtown. Alderman McDougal was the first to say, "I will take roads." Alderman Brown wanted "Downtown." Aldermen Coachmen and Fields agreed to Ordinances. AlderLady Dankart was a natural for "Environment." Jim Reed and I took on the possibility of a sewer bond election. We all agreed that what we did for down town, we had to do equal for the neighborhoods.

At the same time, the Vision Committee was designing a plan to bring Salado together and improve the Village. Their vision was very similar to the Aldermen/lady's vision; therefore, it was easy to melt them together.

Those 5 Aldermen/Lady begin to make things happen. Mike McDougal formed a committee of 5 and started working on a plan to improve roads in 5 years. Fred Brown started a committee to bring "downtown to life" starting with lights and having a Texas A&M class to design downtown. Frank and Hans started reading and re-writing the Ordinances. Amber took on recycling and cleaning the low water bridge along with creek environment.

And in all of this, no one predicted the need for a tax increase, the immediate need of a Sewer Bond Election, the disorganization of the Municipal Office, and the problem of permits. And, if that was not enough, Sanctuary became a reality presenting an entire new set of opportunities that the Village was not prepared to meet or address. And, the "hits kept on coming" – closing Holland Bridge, the sale of Robertson Ranch acreage, and the I-35 construction that continues to be torn up and never completed.

Yet, the Spirit of Salado grew stronger. It started with the refurbishment of the Golf Course, the Memorial Day Service in the Cemetery, and the beautiful 4th of July fireworks. It continued with Blue Lapis in the Park, Keep Salado Beautiful, and College Hill. The Art Festival in August, the Village Picnic in Sheryl Park, Christmas in October, and the Christmas Stroll featuring the largest parade in history.

The Village Voice allowing the Mayor's article, the editorials, the Salado Mayors Blog were also instrumental in positive communication.

The Chamber of Commerce and the Village formed a partnership that will reap benefits for the future. Salado was chosen to become a Purple Heart Village. The Village Choir's gave inspiring performances, the art guilds/leagues displayed beautiful paintings and pottery, and Tablerock gave stellar performances that were the envy of Hollywood.

All of these events began to turn the depression of Salado into the hope of tomorrow.

Five Town Halls were held giving people a voice, and a Sewer Bond election passed.

Where we are now

We are in the greatest challenge in the history of Salado. At least 750 acres of development is coming between 2015 and 2017. A Water Treatment plant and sewer lines are in the beginning planning stages. The I-35 construction continues to cause frustration and hardships. Businesses strive to overcome slow sales. The perfect storm has formed.

Yet, there is progress.

For the first time, there is a 5-6 year road repair plan that will begin in March.

Our first Ordinance has been approved and is in effect.

A Texas A&M city architectural class will soon visit the Village to talk to the citizens about their desires for downtown. The first lights have been installed around the Civic Center.

The low water bridge by Sheryl Park is on the schedule to be cleaned.

The engineers are working the details for the Water Treatment Plant.

To meet the challenge of development, three working committees are preparing the way forward :

Develop and Economic Agreements are staggering huge. Yet, this committee is already making recommendations on points of negotiation.

The Water Treatment Plant has very experienced citizens working out the details. With this committee, you are in good hands.

The ETJ and Annexation will take on the difficult task of city annexation and the ETJ. These are not easy subjects and can become controversial quickly

The partnership between the City and the Chamber of Commerce is becoming more defined and stronger.

Most important, all the stacks of papers are now neatly filed; our accounting is on line; and the Ordinances can be found easily. It has taken 3 months of long hours to organize the Village Office but it is well on its way.

In June and July, we will review the budget line by line.

By early winter, we will re-do our website and update our Comprehensive Plan that was written in 2004.

Our Police will soon be in a new Police Station next door to the Village Municipal Building, and our Village Municipal Building will have a new look. Volunteers did all the work.

We do not have the money to hire experience, but we have the experience of wonderful Salado people. In the coming weeks, that will be tapped as the three committees grow.

Most important, we have an experienced City Manager and a great, committed staff handling the day-by-day activities. Guessing and winks are no longer a part of this system.

Where we are going

By May, 2016:

More roads will be repaired.

More Ordinances will be updated.

Environmental agreements will be reached.

Downtown will be improved. At all cost, the cultural, historic district will not be lost.

The plans for the sewer lines and the water treatment plant will be completed.

Construction of I-35 will come to an end.

Negotiations between Sanctuary and Robinson Ranch acreage will be completed.

Sanctuary development building is scheduled to begin.

By the end of the year, an agreement on the ETJ will be reached.

Hidden Glenn Senior Retirement Home will be completed. Open House is scheduled for December.

The partnership between the City and the Village will produce new events, new ideas, and strengthen old events and ideas. And, as a result, our businesses will find new life and flourish.

In May, 2015, three Aldermen seats will be up for re-election or new ones elected. Choose wisely.

To keep you informed, there are at least three Town Halls planned beginning 17 February, Middle School Cafeteria, 6:30 P.M. Subject: TXDOT and James Construction.

The way is long; sometimes foggy; often bumpy; and will require both hands on the wheel and absolute focus. There will be mistakes, there will be hard choices to make, there will be criticism. However, you will get our best, we will remain flexible, and regardless of the environment; we will remain positive and open.

We ask your support, your understanding, and most of all your encouragement. This is a labor of love for Salado and for you. We do not have all the answers. We probably never will. The best we can do is take it a day or an event at a time.

We are committed to keeping Salado a wonderful Village for all of its citizens. However, change is here now and we must manage it well.

Most respectfully,



Skip Blancett,

Mayor